

# LONG ISLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

March - April 1994 Vol. 4, No. 2

## In This Issue

Thomas Allen Stock has written about Steve Young and his searches for rare plants in NY State (page 9).

Lance Biechele has written an article on The Mushroom collections of Roy Latham. He reports on many of the early LI mushroom collections made by Roy Latham. (page 10)

*Epipactis helleborine* is the only LI orchid that is not native to LI. Eric Lamont has sent an update on the current status and distribution of this species on LI (page 12).

### Corrections

Last month there was a note about *Rosa nitida* new to NY State. The impression was left that there was no specimen of this plant. There is a specimen at Planting Fields Arboretum only the locality was lost. Betty Lotowycz and Barbara Conolly have since checked their notes and we now have a fairly accurate locality.

Eric Lamont has sent a correction to his article on History of LI Botany. See his article on page 11.

## PROGRAMS

8 March 1994 - 7:30 pm\*, Prof. Raymond Welch, "2.2 miles of Springtime Plants." Museum of L.I. Natural Sciences, E.S.S. Bldg., SUNY at Stony Brook. For directions to MOLINS call 516-632-8230.

12 April 1994 - 7:30 pm\*, Thomas Allen Stock, "Slumbering Elephants: The Ecology, Geology, History, & Lore of L.I.'s Glacial Erratics." Uplands Farm Nature Center, Cold Spring Harbor. For directions to Uplands Farm call 516-367-3225.

\* Refreshments are available starting at 7:30 pm; the meeting begins at 8 pm.

## The Rarities

...an ode to Steve Young

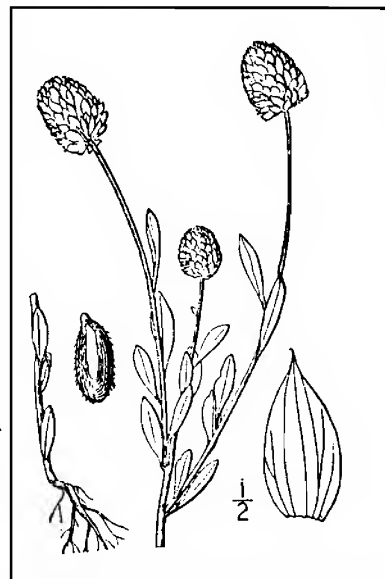
Steve Young had driven down from the Albany area to give his slide lecture on the rarest plants of New York State at Uplands Farm in Cold Spring Harbor. I greeted old friends like Eric Lamont, John Turner, Bruce Lund, Lois Alfano, Bob Laskowski and Elsa l'Hommedieu. I mingled with the best botanists on Long Island whom together probably know the latin names of over 1,000 plant species. I overheard latin in several conversations.

Young flies around the state in a small plane looking for rare plants for the Nature Conservancy. Part of their game plan is to not only find out what is rare, so it can be pointed out to potential land developers, but to establish a baseline barometer to monitor the global decline of our natural heritage.

Mankind has always been interested in anything rare. The fact that there's not much of it makes it unique. We all want to be part of something special. Seeing a rare plant is just that. Young works hard but he does experience moments in which he is part of the excitement of discovery.

Discovering something rare is a very infrequent opportunity. I recall when Bob Laskowski showed me Sandplain *Gerardia* at the FAA property in Sayville. I stared long and hard at this globally rare species. Its image is imbedded in my memory. To see something extremely rare with no guard or glass partition is an unforgettable experience for a naturalist.

Young showed his slides starting at western NY and



*Polygala lutea* L.

worked toward a climax on Long Island. He showed a geologic map of the state and noted how rare plants are closely related to the bedrock types. It seems strange to link these delicate rarities with solid cold rock.

Young's tall, gentle, caring nature seemed to make him a natural for this type of work. His voice was as gentle as the wildflowers he pursues. Several slides were of teams of people he works with. He named each of them. Naming is part of his business.

During the program, he mentioned G1 plants -- the rarest of the rare -- globally rare. On this vast land surface, these plants are like a speck of dust. Many have life histories not yet fully understood. G5 means they are less rare but still rare. In a booklist he distributed, I found the letters SUFF-Y meaning Suffolk-Yes. I counted the plants under this abbreviation and found that Suffolk County has 252 rare plants with 18 only found as a single population and 14 as two populations. There are 800 rare plants in New York State and Suffolk has more than one fourth of them. I find this amazing. Who would think of this as they inch along in traffic near the Midtown Tunnel heading east on the LIE looking at the castoff refuse along the center median? Only a botanist.

The room at the Uplands barn was filled with botanists who oo'd and aah'd as they glimpsed Steve's slides. Many of the plants were humble in beauty, but their dignity loomed large. I could imagine one of these plants talking to another saying, "Finally we're getting some recognition." They stand up against amazing odds. I am in awe of the fact that here in Suffolk, the land surface sliced with hundreds of miles of roads and thousands of homes and stores, 252 rare species of plants survive. This is partly because of the nine major habitats and the many subhabitats within each. It also is due to the positioning of Suffolk between the southern boundary of the northern plant zone and the northern boundary of the southern plant zone.

Young showed *Polygala lutea* - yellow or orange milkwort. The picture reminded me of some crystal object in a Tiffany window - its lacy form, butter yellow color, its delicacy. The experience of seeing rare wildflowers is one of stooping and looking at a small object growing out of the earth. Although it is rare, I appreciate it just as much as I would a dandelion. It is a thing to be looked at to be absorbed for a moment. It is a tiny peephole into which we look at the whole planet - a rare object - balanced on a playing card house - the geology - the climate - the weather - the date - the lack of human interference. All these are the things I see in a rare plant. Each is like a sermon in church on Sunday. Each of them gives us the simple message of ... POSSIBILITY.--Thomas Allen Stock

## The Mushroom Collections of Roy Latham

I first met Roy Latham in August, 1975 and the following article is based upon the author's conjecture concerning his collections of the fleshy fungi and the mycological events that took place after 1913.

Last year, while visiting the New York State Museum in Albany, NY, I had the rewarding experience of reading some of the personal correspondence between Roy Latham and the distinguished American mycologist and State Botanist, Dr. Charles H. Peck (1833-1917). Particularly noteworthy was Latham's letter to Burnham, (August 28, 1911) indicating that he was experiencing difficulty with his attempts at drying fungal specimens.<sup>1</sup> This was a very important observation and one that will subsequently influence much of Roy's later mushroom collections. It should be noted, however, that during the late 1800's, mushrooms were often sliced, placed on herbarium paper and pressed out like plant specimens (Haines, pers. com.). The species identified by Peck are listed in the preliminary "Flora of the Town of Southold, Long Island and Gardiner's Island."

Prior to 1870, Peck was sending specimens to Curtis in England for identification (Haines & Salkin, 1988). By 1875, it was becoming obvious that the mushrooms found in North America were taxonomically different from their European counterparts and Peck was beginning to publish his own determinations of the local mushroom flora. In 1905, Stewart H. Burnham was hired as Peck's assistant and worked in the herbarium at the New York State Museum until 1913. Burnham was instrumental with having Latham's mushroom specimens identified by Peck and also with recognizing the importance of his botanical collections from Long Island. Burnham, however, later noted that often the (mushroom?) collections were "consigned to the waste basket; and several fungi were left unnamed or in doubt" (Burnham & Latham, 1914).

Tragically, however, Peck suffered a debilitating stroke in February, 1913 which left him unable to work. Burnham left Albany during that same year and transferred to Cornell University. With the loss of Peck, the rich *Agaricaceae* flora of Southold Town would never be completely documented and,

<sup>1</sup> Mushroom collections are usually dried in a gravity convection oven with a steady, low heat of 40° C. One can only speculate about what equipment Latham used to preserve his specimens.

unfortunately, the mushrooms of the coastal plain would largely be ignored by succeeding mycologists. Charles Peck never recovered from his illness and the "Father of American Mycology" died in July, 1917.

The First Supplement of the 'Flora' was published in 1917. It was based on Latham's collections during 1915 when he started to send his fungal specimens to C. G. Lloyd at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio. Lloyd was somewhat ill-tempered and may have criticized the quality of Roy's poorly dried fleshy fungal specimens. In a letter to Latham from Lloyd, March 17, 1916<sup>2</sup>, Lloyd commented that he was not "working with the dried *Boletus*" and annotated after his determination of *Collybia velutipes* that (he) "does not usually try to name Agarics from dried specimens." The majority of mushrooms listed in the remaining supplements consist, therefore, of almost entirely *Aphyllporales*.

Lloyd was extremely interested in the *Gasteromycetes* (Coker & Couch, 1928) and identified several rare 'stink-horns' collected by Latham including *Ithyphallus rubicundus* (published by Lloyd in *Mycology Notes* 65: 1077, Nov., 1920) and *Lysurus borealis*, affectionately known as the "stinking squid." Altogether, there are 267 specimens collected by Latham between the periods 1912-1924 in the C. G. Lloyd Herbarium (Rossman, in a letter, January, 1994). These collections are maintained at the U. S. National Fungus Collections in Beltsville, Maryland.

Finally, Latham also sent specimens to Professor Dearness for determination. John Dearness (1852-1954) was a "contemporary" of Peck and spent his entire life studying the mushroom flora in the providence of Ontario, Canada. He was President of the Mycological Society of America (in 1937) and wrote or co-authored over 50 papers on the fungi of Canada (Haines & Salkin, 1988). Unfortunately, there are only a few species of mushrooms identified by Dearness and these are listed, along with Dr. Lloyd's determinations, in the fourth and fifth supplements which were published in 1924 and 1925.

It was apparent that Latham experienced many dilemmas with his collections of the fleshy fungi. When Dr. Peck left the New York State Museum in 1913, the mycological community had lost the most important scholar of the time. After Peck, there were very few mycologists that were willing to attempt to determine the boxes of half-spoiled specimens that often were received daily from all over the country. And each year, thousands of species of mushrooms continue to fruit abundantly in the woods at Southold.--**Lance Biechele**, Princess Anne, Maryland.

<sup>2</sup>Lloyd's letters were graciously supplied by Eric Lamont.

## Literature Cited

- Burnham, S. H. & R. A. Latham. 1914. The flora of the town of Southold, Long Island, and Gardiner's Island. *Torreyia* 14: 201-25, 14: 229-254.  
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\_\_\_\_\_. 1924. Ibid. First Supplementary List. *Torreyia* 24: 22-32.  
\_\_\_\_\_. 1925. Ibid. First Supplementary List. *Torreyia* 25: 71-83.  
Coker, W. H. & J. N. Couch. 1928. *The Gasteromycetes of the Eastern United States and Canada*. Dover Publications Inc., New York.  
Haines, J. H. & I. F. Salkin. 1988. *History of North American Mycology*. *Mycotaxon* 26: 1-79, reprinted for the NYS.

## A Clarification on Stewart H. Burnham (1870-1943)

In the last issue of the LIBS newsletter, I discussed the Long Island Botanical Society in historical perspective, and in an attempt to simplify the account I presented an inaccuracy. Appropriately, Gordon Tucker from the New York State Museum at Albany and Bob Dirig from the Bailey Hortorium at Cornell University, each brought the error to my attention.

The article's inaccuracy pertains to the botanical collaboration between Roy Latham (1881-1979) and Stewart Burnham. During the early 1900's Latham sent many Long Island plant specimens to Burnham for determinations, resulting in the 1914 publication of the *Flora of Southold Township and Gardiner's Island*. I noted in the article that Burnham was affiliated with Cornell University, and therein lies the error.

Burnham held the position of Assistant in Botany at Cornell University during 1904 and 1905. From 1905 to 1913 he worked as Assistant State Botanist at the New York State Museum at Albany. In 1920, Burnham returned to Cornell as Assistant in Botany, and from 1922 to about 1940 he held the position of Assistant Curator of the Cornell University Herbarium.

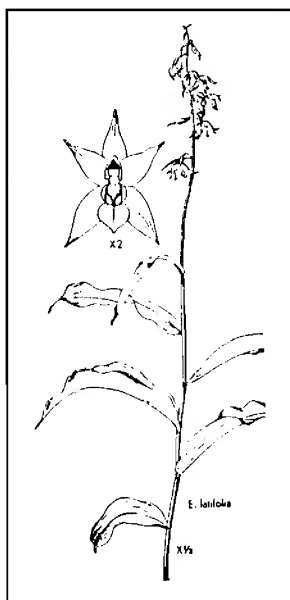
In the introduction to their 1914 flora, Burnham wrote: "Roy A. Latham of Orient, from May 25, 1909, until the present time, collected the following plants: and many of the specimens passed through my hands while in the State Botanist's office at Albany, New York." Therefore, Burnham was actually at Albany, not Cornell, when Latham sent him plant material from Southold Township and Gardiner's Island.

As Bob Dirig wrote in his recent letter to me: "A very minor point, but important for context, I suppose."  
-Eric Lamont

# The weed orchid (*Epipactis helleborine*) on Long Island, New York

During the past five years I have been conducting a comprehensive herbarium search of the orchids of Long Island, New York. Label data has been recorded from all Long Island orchid specimens from the following herbaria: The New York Botanical Garden (NY), New York State Museum at Albany (NYS), Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BKL), Cornell University (CU), Gray Herbarium at Harvard University (GH), and Planting Fields Arboretum (OBPL).

One thing I have learned from this study is there is a virtual absence of voucher specimens for Long Island's only non-native orchid, *Epipactis helleborine*. No specimens of this species have been deposited at NY, BKL, CU, and GH; two specimens have been deposited at NYS (Greenport, 2 Aug 1962, Latham s.n.; Greenport, 3 Aug 1962, Smith, Miller & Latham 34360), and two specimens have been deposited at OBPL (Lloyd Neck, 6 Aug 1974, Lotowycz 7697; Oyster Bay, 7 Jul 1977, Lotowycz 8762).



*Epipactis helleborine* (L.) Crantz

I knew that the weed orchid was more common on Long Island than these few vouchers indicated; therefore, in volume 3 (no. 5) of the LIBS newsletter (1993) I asked members to share locations of *Epipactis* populations. The response has been significant, and I take this opportunity to thank the contributors and share the accumulated information with the membership.

Arthur Skopec, from Whitestone, sent me pressed specimens of *Epipactis* from Oakland Lake (Bayside), Cunningham Park (Fresh Meadows), and Douglaston. Tom Delendick, from Brooklyn Botanic Garden, collected *Epipactis* from Queens Village, Jamaica Estates, and Mount Prospect Park. Dave Kunstler, from New York City Parks Dept., collected a specimen from Cove Neck, Oyster Bay. Jim Ash, from Sag Harbor, collected a voucher from Northwest Woods, and reported additional populations from Shelter Island and

Georgica. John Rusch, from NYC, wins the "best pressed" award for his magnificent series of vouchers from Bayview (Southold Township). Paul Stoutenburgh contributed another Southold Township specimen from near his home at Cutchogue.

Several members reported new populations of *E. helleborine* from Long Island, but were unable to collect voucher specimens. Celia and Julius Hastings report the orchid from Wertheim Wildlife Refuge (South Haven); Fred and Joanne Knapp report a population from Locust Valley; Rich Kelly reported occurrences from three localities: Hewlett, Lakeland, and Cunningham Park; Lois and Allan Lindberg reported three occurrences: Rocky Point, Nissequogue, and East Islip; Ron Rozsa reported a population from East Patchogue; and John Turner reported a population from Commack.

At all of the above locations, *E. helleborine* occurred in disturbed habitats, especially along roadsides and trailsides. It may be interesting to note that Roy Latham documented the first Long Island population of the weed orchid from Moore's Woods, Greenport, where a vigorous population still persists. Latham claimed to have taken many botanists to Moore's Woods to see the crane-fly orchid (*Tipularia discolor*), and possibly *Epipactis* seeds were inadvertently introduced to Long Island by an unsuspecting orchid enthusiast from upstate New York (the first North American report of *Epipactis* was from Syracuse, New York, in 1879).

During 1994, I plan to verify the unvouchered reports of *Epipactis* from Long Island. If you know of an additional population and would like to contribute to the Atlas of Long Island Orchids, please contact me and I will gratefully acknowledge your assistance in the final publication.--Eric Lamont

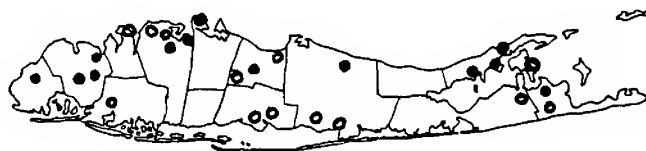


Fig. 1. The distribution of *Epipactis helleborine* on Long Island, New York. Closed circles (●) indicate an occurrence based upon a voucher specimen; open circles (○) indicate an occurrence based upon an unvouchered report.

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# SOCIETY NEWS

## *Joe Beitel Memorial*

### *January Meeting--Jan. 11*

**Steve Clemants** announced that **Tom Delendick** is doing much better. If you wish to write to him you may send letters c/o Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11225 and they will get to him.

**Eric Lamont** and **Bruce Lund** reported on a recent meeting at Mashomack on the subject of Robins Island. The Nature Conservancy has a year in which to write a management program for **Louis Bacon**. Mr. Bacon is open to the environmental community's ideas.

**Marilyn Jordan**, Director of Ecology (Stewardship Program) of The Nature Conservancy's LI chapter, spoke on both the ecology and the history of fire in the pine barrens and the maritime grasslands, with some comments about the oak-brush plains. Much of her information was of great interest to the audience.

### *February Meeting--Feb. 8*

Due to the snow storm the February meeting was canceled.

### *Flora Committee*

The Flora Committee has been devoting the first three meetings of 1994 to completing the fern and fern-allies maps. These will be published in the next issue of the Newsletter. If any members have information they wish to contribute about fern distributions on LI they should contact **Skip Blanchard** or **Eric Lamont**.

### *New York Natural History Conference*

Don't forget that the 3rd New York Natural History Conference will be held at the New York State Museum in Albany. Registration is available at the door.

For more information call the New York State Museum at 518-474-5812.

### *LI Naturalists*

"Building Partnerships" A symposium hosted by New York State Parks will be held at Connetquot River State Park Preserve Wed., March 16, 1994 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Learn how forming partnerships has benefited local organizations, discuss some common concerns we share and exchange ideas, thoughts and solutions. Contact **Gary Lawton** (516) 581-1005 for information.

19 March 1994, Sat. - BIG REED POND, Montauk.

The membership is invited to join board members and a representative from the Suffolk County Parks Department to locate an appropriate boulder for the memorial plaque to the late **Joseph Beitel**. Car pooling will be available. For more specifics please call **Skip Blanchard** (516-421-5619) or **Eric Lamont** (516-722-5542). A dedication is being planned for the summer of 1994.

### *Field Trips*

**April 23, 1994, Sat., 10 a.m.** SHU SWAMP PHOTO SAFARI. **Barbara Conolly** of the North Shore Wildlife Sanctuary and **Tom McCloskey** of the Long Island Sierra Photo Committee will co-lead this walk. Bring Camera and note book as we share experiences in nature photography and learn about the flora of this special place. Tripod and boots may be helpful. Meet at the Shu Swamp parking lot across the road from the Mill Neck LIRR Station. Rain cancels; call Tom (516-785-7329) between 8 & 9 AM day of trip if in doubt. Joint outing with the Long Island Sierra Club.

### *E-Mail Address*

**Steve Clemants** has an E-Mail Address (clemants@panix.com). If you are submitting an article or notice for the newsletter you may wish to send it via E-Mail. Please do so as this will save me time with typing.

### *TNC Requests Volunteers*

The Nature Conservancy requests volunteers from LIBS for two botanical projects:

1. Collect field data at maritime grassland sites at Montauk. The volunteer will assist an experienced scientist, but the ability to identify common plants in the field is required.
2. Assist in the formation of an herbarium at Uplands Farm Nature Center.

Interested individuals should contact: Dr. **Marilyn Jordan** (516-367-3225).

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## LONG ISLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

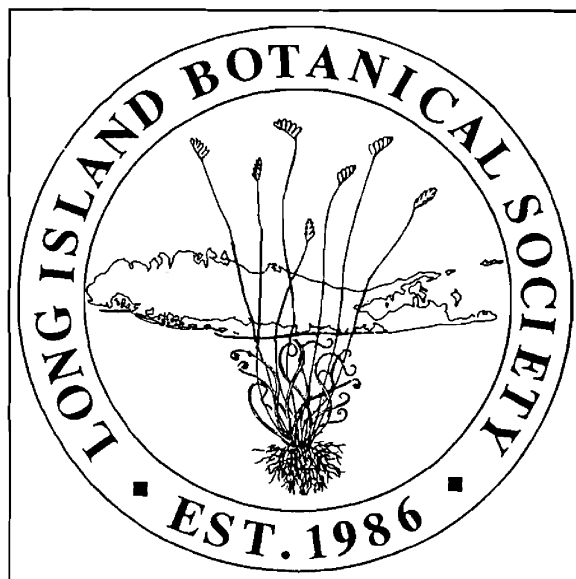
Founded: 1986; Incorporated: 1989.

The Long Island Botanical Society is dedicated to the promotion of field botany and a greater understanding of the plants that grow wild on Long Island, New York.

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### Membership

Membership is open to all, and we welcome new members. Annual dues are \$10. For membership, make your check payable to LONG ISLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY and mail to: Lois Lindberg, Membership Chairperson, 45 Sandy Hill Rd., Oyster Bay, NY 11771-3111



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## LONG ISLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

c/o Muttontown Preserve

Muttontown Lane

East Norwich, NY 11732